

# Former resident leads nationwide census

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By Judith Doner Berne  
staff writer

Tuesday night Barbara Everitt Bryant will be a far cry from her former Oakland County lifestyle. She will be counting the homeless on the streets of New York City.

"I think the leader of the troops has to be out there," the new director of the U.S. Bureau of the Census said during an interview earlier this month.

A silver-haired, sparkling blue-eyed grandmother of five, Bryant lived and raised her three children in Birmingham and Bloomfield Township from 1956-78. Appointed by President Bush in December, she is the 37th director of the census bureau — and the first woman.

She was in Detroit recently to mobilize the media for the "Complete Count" campaign designed to get every possible person across the United States counted as of April 1. Part of that campaign is the Tuesday-Wednesday effort to include the nation's street homeless.

"We've always counted people in transient housing (i.e. shelters), she said. "This is the first time we've done streets and abandoned buildings."

AN ACCURATE count is important financially and politically, she said, particularly to Detroit, which hopes to maintain its 1 million population.

"Oakland County should gain political power," Bryant says. "And

there are definite spots in Wayne County."

"We're going to see a lot of change in Oakland County, more ethnic diversity due to the outmigration of minorities from Detroit."

"An army is out there to bring in these questionnaires," she said, stressing that confidentiality is guaranteed. "We expect to learn about the Detroit suburbs, but your individual name won't be connected with the data," she promises.

Bryant calls her appointment "going to the mountain top" after 25 years in survey research. She was most recently senior vice president for Market Opinion Research in Detroit, one of the nation's largest marketing research companies.

Coincidentally, one of her last projects before going to Washington D.C. was writing the proposal for the Jewish Welfare Federation report on metropolitan Detroit's Jewish population released the day she was in town to kick off the census campaign.

BRYANT'S RISE to the top of her field started "on the day my youngest child went into first grade" and she took a job in public relations at Oakland University in Rochester.

Holder of a bachelor of arts in physics from Cornell University, she then went back to school to earn a masters in journalism and a doctorate in communications, both from Michigan State University.

She was hired as a senior analyst for Market Opinion Research in 1971, serving as senior vice president for the last 12 years.

Although she moved to Ann Arbor in the late 70's, she has maintained her Oakland County friendships, such as with Anne Rumsey of Bloomfield Township whom she met while both were active in the Birmingham-Bloomfield League of Women Voters.

"I think this lady has worked extremely hard," Rumsey said in a telephone interview Friday. "She'll be part of it."

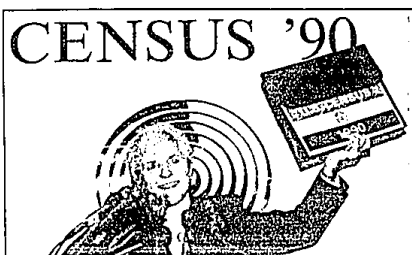
Rumsey recalled asking Bryant who was commuting to East Lansing while her children were in school how she managed it all. "She told me it was very simple. They'd all get up and have breakfast together, and go off to school. Then they'd come home, have dinner together and all do their homework."

"She had a very supportive husband and family."

NOW, SHE HAS an even longer commute. She has a town house in Washington D.C. while her husband, John, remains in their Ann Arbor home. He's adjunct research science professor of electrical engineering and computer science at the University of Michigan.

"We make it a real point of getting together every weekend," Bryant said.

Her travels to promote the census do occasionally put her in the same city as her three children: Linda Bryant Valentine, a 1968 Seaholm High School graduate, a Chicago attorney; Dr. Randal Bryant, a 1970 graduate of Seaholm, an associate professor of computer science at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh; and Lois Bryant, a 1973 graduate of Kingswood, a textile designer in New York City.



A former county resident, census director Barbara Everitt Bryant campaigns for people to "Answer the census. It counts for more than you think."

## Alternatives to court

Molly Forward, executive director of the new Settlement Center for Oakland County, will speak about alternative dispute resolution centers at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 20, at the Bloomfield Township Public Library.

ADRs, as they are becoming known, are alternative methods of solving legal problems outside the courts.

They can be used in disputes between landlords and tenants, consumers and merchants, neighbors or

citizen and government.

The program is free and open to the public. For more information, call the library at 642-8800.

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